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NCFE Level 3 Applied General in Business and Enterprise (601/8908/3)

Assessment window: 28 March 2019

Paper Number: P000699

This report contains information in relation to the external assessment from the Chief Examiner, with an emphasis on the standard of learner work within this assessment window.

The aim is to highlight where learners generally perform well as well as any areas where further development may be required.

Key points:

- grading information
- administering the external assessment
- standard of learner work
- Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment
- referencing of external assessment tasks
- evidence creation
- interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria
- planning in the external assessment.

It is important to note that learners should not sit the external assessment until they have taken part in the relevant teaching of the full qualification content.

Grade Boundary Information

Each learner's external assessment paper is marked by an Examiner and awarded a raw mark. During the awarding process, a combination of statistical analysis and professional judgement is used to establish the raw marks that represent the minimum required standard to achieve each grade. These raw marks are outlined in the table below.

Max Mark	Distinction	Merit	Pass
91	70	53	36

Grade boundaries represent the minimum raw mark required to achieve a certain grade. For example, if the grade boundary for the Pass grade is 25, a minimum raw mark of 25 is required to achieve a Pass.

*Distinction	*Merit	*Pass
289	210	175

** In order to ensure that levels of achievement remain comparable for the same assessment across different assessment windows, all raw marks are converted to a points score based on a uniform mark scale (UMS). For more information about UMS and how it is used to determine overall qualification grades, please refer to the qualification specification.*

Administering the External Assessment

The external assessment is invigilated and must be conducted in line with our Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment. Learners may require additional pre-release material in order to complete the Tasks within the paper. These must be provided to learners in line with our Regulations.

Learners must be given the resources to carry out the Tasks and these are highlighted within the Qualification Specific Instructions Document (QSID).

Standard of Learner Work

There was only a small entry in this first window for this specification. Learners attempted all questions and produced answers that suggested the whole syllabus had been taught before the examination was sat.

Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment

Malpractice

There were no reported instances of malpractice in this assessment window. The Chief Examiner would like to take this opportunity to advise learners that instances of malpractice (for example, copying of work from another learner) will affect the outcome on the assessment.

Maladministration

No instances of maladministration were reported in this assessment window. The Chief Examiner would like to highlight the importance of adhering to the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment document in this respect.

Responses of the Tasks within the Sections of the External Assessment Paper

Part A

1(a). This was well answered by learners who were able to correctly identify the item found in a person specification.

1(b). Learners were usually able to explain at least one advantage and one disadvantage that could arise from operating as a private limited company. The explanations of the advantages tended to be stronger than those for the disadvantage. The most common advantages suggested related to limited liability and increased access to sources of finance.

1(c). Learners found this question more challenging. They were required to evaluate Dee Deeson’s decision to improve PL hotel communications. Answers tended to provide more detail as to the benefits, with less attention paid to the potential pitfalls. In order to reach the top band of marks learners must provide a justified conclusion.

2(a). The answers to this were mixed with not all learners able to identify correctly which one of the items listed would NOT be classified as a hygiene factor, in Herzberg's theory of motivation.

2(b). Learners were able to correctly place PL and their 3 main rivals in their correct positions on the market map.

2(c). Learners were able to identify an external stakeholder but some answers lacked the depth needed to achieve full marks. For example, if a supplier was identified as the external stakeholder then the overall impact on them might be quite small, as the hotel is likely to be only one of many customers.

2(d). Learners were asked to evaluate the possible impacts on PL arising from staff shortages, changes to visitor numbers and a change in interest rates. Learners tended to produce more accurate and detailed answers with regard to staffing and visitor numbers. It was pleasing to see learners make use of the stimulus material provided e.g. that only 5% of visitors came from EU countries did mean that this was of less importance overall. To access the full range of marks learners needed to come to a considered judgment as to which of these factors would have the most significance and which would have the least significance.

3(a). This was well answered with learners able to correctly identify an example of a financial method of motivation used by a business to improve worker performance.

3(b). Learners were able to correctly identify two elements of PL's marketing mix and how these might be altered to halt the decline of its room occupancy rates. The better answers tended to relate to product and price and used information from the stimulus to add weight to the arguments.

3(c). Learners tended to find this a more demanding question. Whilst they could identify two changes that PL could consider to improve the quality of the market research they undertake, the answers provided tended to be more detailed and accurate on the advantages rather than disadvantages.

4(a). Most learners correctly identified which item was the most appropriate method of remuneration if PL wants to encourage its bar staff to increase sales of coffee and pastries.

4(b). This was well answered. Learners need to label the Y axis as "costs and revenue".

4(c). Learners were required to consider 3 options to improve cash flow. Good use was made of the stimulus material provided. Good answers suggested that postponing the planned development was only a short-term fix; that cuts in portion sizes and staffing might also have more long-term disadvantages.

Part B

5. Learners were required to discuss how the following may influence the promotional mix for PL's new conference facilities aimed at other businesses:

- Its position in the product life cycle.
- Its target market.
- Its rivals' promotional campaigns.
- Its promotional campaign budget.

Overall a good use was made of the stimulus as learners were able to relate each of the bullet points to relevant information provided. In order to achieve the higher levels of the mark bands learners need to provide a judgement as to which of the 4 factors would have the most and least effect on the promotional mix, chosen by the business for its new conference facilities

6. This was less well answered. Learners needed a working knowledge of Hackman & Oldham's job characteristics model in order to answer the question. This is one of the 3 motivational theories listed in Unit 4 LO1 of the specification. The other two are Maslow and Herzberg.

Chief Examiner: Peter O'Loughlin
Date: 6th August 2019